

HEALTH  
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THE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL OF MARCH.

Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the year 1944.

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to submit to you my  
Report for the year 1944.  
A Report from the Sanitary Inspector is  
also included.

I am,

Yours faithfully,

S. Governor,

Medical Officer of Health.

(i) Public Health Officers.

Medical Officer of Health - S. Governor, M.B., B. Ch.

Sanitary Inspector - D. Lister, M.R. San.I., M.S.I.A.

(ii) General Statistics.

Area in acres	19,777
Population (Registrar-General's estimate for 1944)	12,645
Number of inhabited houses	3,752
Rateable value	£50,790
Amount represented by 1d rate	£ 205

The estimated population shows an increase of 215  
on the 1943 figure.

(iii) Vital Statistics.

Table I - Live Births.

	<u>M.</u>	<u>F.</u>	<u>Total.</u>
Legitimate	109	93	202
Illegitimate	11	11	22
	<u>120</u>	<u>104</u>	<u>224</u>

The birth rate is 17.7 per 1,000 population as  
compared with 17.6 for England and Wales. This is a  
considerable increase on the births for the previous  
year, when the birth rate in the district was 15.2  
compared with 16.5 for England and Wales.

Table II - Still-Births.

	<u>M.</u>	<u>F.</u>	<u>Total.</u>
Legitimate	2	-	2
Illegitimate	-	-	-
	<u>2</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2</u>

The rate for still-births is 0.16 per 1,000 compared  
with 0.50 for England and Wales. The number of still-births  
is well below the figure of 0.56 for the previous year and it  
compares very favourably with the average.

Table III - Infantile Mortality.

	<u>M.</u>	<u>F.</u>	<u>Total.</u>
Legitimate	7	3	10
Illegitimate	-	-	-
	<u>7</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>10</u>

The infantile mortality rate is 44.6 per 1,000 live births compared with 46 for England and Wales, a reduction in 1943 when the figures were 52.9 and 49 respectively.

The causes of infantile death were as follows:-

Premature birth	3
Congenital causes	3
Whooping cough	2
Broncho-Pneumonia	1
Acute catarrhal jaundice	1
	<u>10</u>

There were no deaths recorded during the year from infantile diarrhoea under 2 years.

Table IV - Deaths in the Area and Causes.

	<u>M.</u>	<u>F.</u>	<u>Total.</u>
Typhoid and Paratyphoid fevers	-	-	-
Cerebrospinal fever	-	-	-
Scarlet fever	-	-	-
Whooping cough	1	1	2
Diphtheria	-	-	-
T.B. of respiratory system	1	2	3
Other forms of T.B.	-	1	1
Syphilitic diseases	1	-	1
Influenza	-	-	-
Measles	-	-	-
Acute polio-myelitis and polio-encephalitis	-	-	-
Acute infectious encephalitis	-	1	1
Cancer	18	8	26
Diabetes	1	2	3
Intra-cranial vascular lesions	6	4	10
Heart disease	16	16	32
Other diseases of circulatory system	4	2	6
Bronchitis	5	8	13
Pneumonia	5	1	6
Other respiratory diseases	1	2	3
Ulcer of stomach or duodenum	2	-	2
Diarrhoea (under 2 years).	-	-	-
Appendicitis	-	2	2
Other digestive diseases	3	1	4
Nephritis	1	1	2
Puerperal and post-abortive sepsis	-	-	-
Other maternal causes	-	1	1
Premature births	3	-	-
Congenital malformations etc.	1	1	2
Suicide	-	-	-
Road Traffic accidents	3	2	5
Other violent causes	6	1	7
All other causes	5	14	19
Total: -	83	71	154

The death rate in March this year is slightly higher than that for England and Wales, being 12.2 per 1,000 population as compared with 11.6. Last year's figures were 9.8 for March and 12.1 for England and Wales.



Table V - Ages at Death.

The following table gives the percentages of deaths in the principal age groups:-

Under 1 year	6.49%
1 -5 years	.65%
6 - 15 years	1.30%
16 - 65 years	33.12%
66 and over	58.44%
	<u>100.00%</u>

The average age at death was 68 years.

(iv) Prevalence and Control of Infectious Diseases.

Infectious diseases notified:

Erysipelas	7
Measles	3
Scarlet fever	15
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	3
Whooping cough	60
Jaundice	1
T.B. - pulmonary	4
T.B. - Non-pulmonary	1
Meningococcal meningitis	1
Total:-	<u>127</u>

All the cases of Scarlet fever except two were removed to Wisbech Joint Isolation Hospital.

The measles epidemic which was in full swing in 1943, ended in the early part of 1944, with only a further 3 notifications.

The whooping cough epidemic which was beginning in the previous year continued until December.

During the year there was an entire absence of Diphtheria; this was no doubt due to the progress of the Immunisation Scheme. At the end of the year the percentages for the Urban District were as follows:- Under 5 - 70.1%  
5-15 - 89.5%

The total number of infectious diseases notified during the year was considerably less than that of the previous year.

Treatment of Scabies; 18 cases of Scabies were sent for treatment to the Wisbech Public Assistance Institution by virtue of the arrangements made under the Scabies Order 1941.

On the whole the health of the town this year has been very good.

Table 1. Summary of Data

The following table summarizes the data collected during the study. The data are presented in two columns: "Year" and "Number of Cases".

Year	Number of Cases
1971	12
1972	15
1973	18
1974	20
1975	22
1976	25
1977	28
1978	30
1979	32
1980	35

The data show a steady increase in the number of cases over the ten-year period.

The following table summarizes the data collected during the study.

1971

Table 2. Summary of Data

Year	Number of Cases
1971	12
1972	15
1973	18
1974	20
1975	22
1976	25
1977	28
1978	30
1979	32
1980	35

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THE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL OF MARCH.

Sanitary Inspector's Report for the Year 1944.

**I. SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE AREA:**

The following are details of visits and inspections carried out in 1944:-

Public Health Acts: Nuisances	143
Housing Acts: Disrepair	99
do : Overcrowding	6
Cowsheds	26
Dairies and Milkshops	75
Slaughterhouses	523
Knackers Yards	14
Bakehouses	6
Fried Fish Shops	8
Food Preparing Premises	54
Other Food Shops and Stores	71
Factories and Workshops	6
Shops Acts	1
Infectious Diseases	24
Scabies Order	7
Verminous Premises (inc. Rats and Mice)	75
Keeping of fowls etc.	9
Piggeries	14
Refuse accommodation	57
Moveable Dwellings	35
Sanitary Conveniences	30
Drains Inspections	15
Miscellaneous, interviews and meetings	286
Civil Defence	142

Total:- 1726

The following table shows defects found and remedied during the year by action under the Public Health and Housing Acts:-

	<u>Defects Found.</u>	<u>Defects remedied.</u>	<u>Outstanding at end of 1944.</u>
(including brought forward from 1943).			
<u>Drainage</u>			
Choked drains	13	13	-
Defective drains	4	2	2
Insufficient drainage and flooding	4	2	2
Drainage polluting dykes	3	1	2
Cesspools over-flowing	4	4	-
Cesspools, defective construction	2	1	1
<u>Sanitary Conveniences</u>			
Defective closets, structure.	11	6	5
Defective sanitary pails	4	4	-
<u>Other Nuisances</u>			
Dirty Houses	3	2	1
Dirty Yards	1	1	-
Nuisance from fowls	2	2	-
Improper disposal of waste water	4	4	-
Moveable Dwellings	3	3	-
Accumulations of Refuse	7	6	1
<u>Verminous Infestations</u>			
Rats and Mice	8	8	-
Other vermin	2	2	-

Table continued over-leaf:



(Table of defects continued), Defects found. Defects Outstanding  
(including brought remedied. at end  
forward from 1943.) of 1944.

<u>Housing Defects</u>			
Defective roofs	13	7	6
walls	3	-	3
eavesports	10	5	5
plasterwork	17	13	4
washing accommodation	10	1	9
doors and frames	4	3	1
windows, woodwork	5	4	1
stoves or fireplaces	9	3	6
sink waste-pipe	1	1	-
flues	6	4	2
bricks	1	1	-
coal store	1	-	1
Insufficient or defective refuse accommodation	19	12	7
Dampness	2	1	1
Overcrowding	1	1	-
Totals:-	177	117	60

One statutory notice was served in respect of defective sanitary accommodation to a dwellinghouse, and this was complied with.

Legal proceedings were instituted under Section 269 of the Public Health Act 1936 against the owner of a caravan for stationing same on land within the Council's area for more than the permitted period without a licence. No proper sanitary accommodation was provided for the van. Defendant was fined £1 and given 14 days to remove the van. Removal was subsequently effected.

## II. HOUSING:

1 house was represented to the Council during the year for action under Section 11 of the Housing Act 1936, and an undertaking not to re-let for human habitation was accepted from the owner. The tenant has now been rehoused by the Council. Another unfit house, on being vacated, was demolished by the owner, after consultation with the Sanitary Inspector, in anticipation of action by the Local Authority.

Two houses infested with bed-bugs were disinfested by the Council at the request of the owners, treatment being carried out with "Zaldecide" and sulphur fumigation. Results were apparently satisfactory.

## III. WATER SUPPLY:

There has been no change in the circumstances of the district during the year. The following is the information requested in the Ministry of Health's Circular 49/45.

- (i) Whether the water supply of the area and of its several parts has been satisfactory in quality and quantity. - Yes.
- (ii) Where there is a piped supply, whether bacteriological examinations have been made of the water, and the results of any analysis. - No official samples have been taken on behalf of the Council during the war; the water is known to be examined at regular intervals on behalf of the Water Company.
- (iii) The position as to contamination by lead. - The water is hard and has no plumbo-solvent action.
- (iv) Action as to contamination. - There has been no evidence of contamination during the year.



- (v) Particulars of the proportion of dwelling houses and proportion of the population supplied from public water mains.

- (a) Direct to the houses 90%  
(b) By means of standpipes 10%

#### IV. MEAT AND FOOD INSPECTION:

(a) Meat. During the year, the number of animals killed at the two Ministry of Food slaughterhouses in the town was as follows:- Cows 276; Other bovines 892; Calves 376; Sheep 2,143; Pigs 1,208; Total 4,895. This is a considerable increase over 1943, when the corresponding number was 3,468. 100% inspection is aimed at, and can usually be attained, but only by considerable overtime work, much of the killing taking place in the evenings. This year has been particularly difficult in that respect. Mention must be made of the assistance afforded by the slaughterhouse staff, in particular the slaughterhouse manager, without whose help the work would be almost impossible.

Condemnations during the year included the following whole carcasses :- Cows 18; Other bovines 13; Calves 6; Sheep 1; Pigs 83; Total 121; together with a quantity of offals and parts of carcasses bringing the total weight of meat condemned up to 16 tons, 16 cwt. 13 lb.

This is an increase on the previous year, but many of the condemnations are from casualty animals and cases of emergency slaughter, which in fact reflects adversely on the percentages given in the table below. In particular, the figure for pigs is exceptionally high this year, owing to abnormal circumstances.

	Cows	Other bovines	Calves	Sheep	Pigs	Total.
No. of animals killed	276	892	376	2143	1208	4895
Condemnations: <u>Tuberculosis</u> Whole carcasses	13	5	-	-	1	19
Part carcasses and/or organs	100	82	2	-	47	231
% of animals affected with Tuberculosis	40.9	9.7	0.5	-	4.0	5.1
Condemnations: <u>Other causes</u> Whole carcasses	5	8	6	1	82	102
Part carcasses and/or organs	44	141	3	13	97	298
% of animals affected with other diseases	17.7	16.7	2.4	0.6	14.8	8.2



88 lb. of beef and 62½ lb. pork and pork offals had to be condemned from butchers' premises during the hot weather because of decomposition.

(b) Other Foods. Many inspections were made during the year of stocks of other foodstuffs, and the following were condemned as unfit for human consumption:-

(i) <u>Tinned goods.</u>	<u>No. of tins.</u>	<u>Weight, lbs.</u>
Meat	46	96
Fish	73	59½
Vegetables	22	20½
Milk	34	26½
Jam	2	4
Fruit	4	7
	<u>181</u>	<u>213½</u>

(ii) <u>Miscellaneous.</u>	<u>Weight, lbs.</u>
Bacon	523½
Biscuits	19½
Butter	25
Dates	35½
Herrings	196
Jam	26
Mixed Pickles	895
Prunes	25
Shredded Wheat	6½
Sugar	47
	<u>1799½</u>

Some trouble was experienced with bacon and ham during the summer months, and it was necessary to bring the matter to the notice of the Ministry of Food. A modification was made by them in their zoning scheme for this commodity, following which there was no further cause for complaint.

In accordance with Ministry of Food instructions, all unsound bacon and ham, butter and other fats were returned through normal trade channels. In other cases, wherever possible, condemned material was utilized for animal feeding.

All the unsound food was voluntarily surrendered, and in no case was seizure under the Food and Drugs Act required.

#### V. MILK AND DAIRIES:

At the end of the year, 21 persons were registered as producers of milk in the district, and the number of cows in milk was approximately 250. 17 producers dispose of their milk mainly by wholesale and the remaining 4 are retail purveyors. There are in addition 4 other persons registered as retail purveyors who are not producers.

Most of the premises can be said to comply with the letter of the Milk and Dairies Order as to construction, but many are below the generally accepted standard for clean milk production.

Cowsheds and dairies are regularly visited, and a few warnings had to be given in respect of minor contraventions of the Orders. One new farm dairy was erected during the year.

6 licences to produce 'Accredited' milk (an increase of 2) and two to produce 'Tuberculin Tested' milk were in force in the district at the end of the year.



One dairyman in the town holds a licence for a pasteurising plant, and is handling a large proportion of the milk from local farms. The 'holder' method of pasteurisation is employed. This dairy now has an officially approved laboratory under the National Milk Testing and Advisory Scheme, and all incoming milk is tested for keeping quality before heat treatment.

Pasteurised milk is also retailed in the district from 2 other sources outside the area.

Milk Samples: Samples of milk have been taken during the year from local retailers, and sent to the Advisory Bacteriologist at the School of Agriculture, Cambridge, for bacteriological examination.

(a) Ungraded Milks: These were submitted to the Methylene Blue and P. Milk Tests, and the term 'Satisfactory' denotes that the samples reached the standard laid down for 'Accredited' milk.

No. of samples taken	Satisfactory	Not satisfactory
10	7	3

Visits were paid following the unsatisfactory results, and advice given to the producers. Subsequent samples have shown improvement.

(b) National Milk Testing and Advisory Scheme: In the early summer the Council agreed to co-operate with the War Agricultural Executive Committee by allowing the Sanitary Inspector to take samples from producer-retailers not covered by the National Milk Testing and Advisory Scheme. The sending of samples of ungraded milk from retailers to the Cambridge laboratory on behalf of the Council was therefore discontinued and instead, samples were taken for submission to the resazurin test at the local approved laboratory under the Scheme. The following is a summary of the results to the end of the year:-

No. of samples taken	Resazurin Category		
	A	B	C
20	13	3	4

In these cases, the advisory visits following unsatisfactory samples were carried out by the staff of the War Agricultural Executive Committee.

(c) Pasteurised Milk: Samples were also taken during the year of pasteurised milk being sold in the district, and submitted to the School of Agriculture laboratory, Cambridge, for examination by the plate count for cleanliness, and by the phosphatase test to determine the efficiency of heat treatment. The following shows the results:-

No. of samples taken.	Satisfied both tests.	Satisfied plate Count but not phosphatase.	Failed both tests.
6	3	2	1

Again, unsatisfactory results were followed up in each case.

VI. RATS AND MICE: INFESTATION ORDER 1943: The survey required by the Ministry of Food was completed early in the year, and the work of disinfection in the non-agricultural parts of the district has been taken over from the War Agricultural Executive Committee. The results of the survey are very gratifying; while it cannot be said that the district is entirely free from rats, there does not appear to exist in the urban part of the area any major

infestation which has got out of hand. One operator is engaged on the work, on a part-time basis, and the work of reducing the infestations found has proceeded satisfactorily.

**VII. FACTORIES ACT 1937:**

1 informal notice was served during the year with regard to sanitary accommodation not in accordance with the Order; this case was still outstanding at the end of the year.

**VIII. TABLE OF NOTICES SERVED DURING 1944:**

	Served during 1944.	Complied with by 31/12/44.
Public Health and Housing Acts		
Verbal	64	52
Letter	25	13
Statutory	1	1
Food and Drugs Act 1938		
Verbal	1	1
Letter	1	-
Meat Regulations 1924		
Verbal	2	2
Milk and Dairies Orders		
Verbal	6	6
Letter	1	1
Factories Act 1937		
Letter	1	-
Shops Act (Sec. 10) 1934		
Verbal	1	1
Other Acts and Orders		
Verbal	1	1
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	104	78
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In conclusion, I should like to take the opportunity of thanking the members of the Council and my colleagues on the staff for their helpful co-operation during the year.

I am, Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

Yours obedient servant,

D. LISTER.

Sanitary Inspector.